



705 North Mountain Road
Newington, CT 06111-1411

Phone: 860-953-2626
Fax: 860-953-1978

www.protectiveservices.org

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Good afternoon Senator Handley, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is William J. Boucher, and I am the President of the Protective Services Employees Coalition. I am here today to speak on the proposed "takeover" of the UConn Health Center by Hartford Hospital and Raised Bills No. 6335 & No. 800: An Act Concerning The University Of Connecticut Health Center Facilities Plan and An Act Concerning Funding The Fringe Benefit Differential For the Employees Of The Health Center.

Protective Services Employees Coalition is a labor union that represents approx. 1,000 police officers, firefighters and other public safety professionals who are employed by the State of Connecticut. My members include the police officers, firefighters, paramedics and EMTs employed at the University of Connecticut Health Center.

There has been much discussion recently concerning the funding of the UConn Health Center and the fact that it has had budget shortfalls in the past several years. While much of these shortfalls can be attributed to the unique arrangement that Dempsey Hospital has for its employees with the Office of the State Comptroller - having to pay the difference between the state fringe benefits rate and the average rate of the fringe benefits paid by short-term acute care

general and children's hospitals for their employees. No other state agency has to operate under this arrangement and it puts the health center in an unfair advantage when trying to hold the line on its budget.

But I believe that there is a bigger picture that we need to focus on and that is the role that state government in general, and the Health Center specifically, plays in the community. If the proposed "takeover" were to happen, would the mission of the Health Center change and would that change the services that are currently provided to the community and the citizens of the state by the Health Center?

As a public administration major in college, one of the things I learned was the government provides services to its citizens that are needed, but are not provided by businesses. This is due to the fact that it may not be profitable for a business to do so, or the service would not be provided as well if the bottom line was making a profit. The University of Connecticut Health Center provides those type services. Instead of looking at the bottom line, we should be focusing on the services that are being provided that would not be, if the mission of the Health Center was to change.

If you were to examine the services provided by my members, the police officers and firefighters, paramedics and EMTs, you would find that in calendar year 2008, in addition to their duties at the Health Center, they responded to 2,410 medical calls in the towns surrounding the Health Center, including Avon, Burlington, Canton, Farmington, West Hartford and Simsbury; 86 fire calls and 81 police calls for assistance in these towns; and 321 neo-natal runs. As a matter of fact, the UConn Health center has the only licensed neo-natal transport unit in the State of Connecticut. Without the Health Center, there may have been 321 less babies alive in the state today. These are the service that the UConn Health Center and Dempsey Hospital provide and type of issues that need to be looked at, and discussed, when making a decision on the future of the Health Center, not just the bottom line.

In addition, we need to seriously consider whether or not it is the right thing for the state to turn over a valuable asset like the Health Center and Dempsey Hospital to a private entity, along with over \$600 million dollars, and then have very little input and control. Is this the best thing for the citizens of Connecticut?

I would like to close by thanking the members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee for their attention to this important issue, and I would be happy to answer any questions and provide you with any further information you may require.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. J. Boucher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" and last name "Boucher" clearly distinguishable.

William J. Boucher,
President